1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

for the evening meal, Rosary, and sleep. Electricity has made his time-table only slightly less dependent on the times of the rising and setting sun.

Increased spending-power, a more varied diet now including a variety of preserved and non-local foods, and the replacement of home-produced cotton by purchased materials for making clothes, have all contributed to the extension of shopping facilities in the villages. Apart from the 'general store', specialised shops have also made their appearance - butchers, pharmacists, clothing shops, and so on. The 1939-45 war brought flour and bread rationing and the end of home-baking - hence a further village specialisation (see p. 182). Since the War, the number of vans touring the countryside every week has increased rapidly to bring a variety of wares to the door of even the most lonely farmhouse. The *petrolju* van was early in the field, for the rural Maltese have long relied on paraffin for both cooking and such heating as the houses receive. Yet another addition in recent years to the diet of the poorer classes has been the free distributions of food (cheese, rice, corn-meal and flour) made by C.A.R.E. and by Catholic Relief Services (cheese, beans, flour, etc.), another organisation distributing surplus United States food supplies abroad.

Village housing is changing more slowly. The traditional Maltese rural home was a flat-roofed dwelling built round an enclosed courtyard, from which a staircase frequently led to an upper floor. The courtyard was the centre of domestic life and much of the regular work of the household was done here. A door, large enough to take a cart, opened on to the street. Windows on outside walls were small and rare. In many of the older parts of the villages, accommodation for animals and stores adjoins the rooms occupied by the family, the whole forming a compact economic and domestic unit. Water was carried from a village pump and sanitation, if any, was limited to independent cess-pits requiring periodic emptying. In winter such premises were liable to be very cold; in the heat of summer the rough roads of beaten earth readily produced a fine dust which can only have had harmful effects on the widespread trachoma and similar ailments.

Nowadays much of this survives only in the memory of the older people. Only some village streets in Gozo are not now surfaced; mains sewerage has been extended to all the larger villages of Malta; electricity is absent only in north-western Gozo; familiar red telephone kiosks have appeared all over the Islands; the larger villages in Malta have cinemas, in addition to much older Band Club buildings.

The essential features of the village society within which the Maltese farmer lives today may be summarised thus in conclusion:-

Economically, there has been a change from the independent, subsistent family unit to a diversified and inter-dependent occupational structure in the village, along with a realisation of the impossibility of maintaining Maltese agriculture in its traditional form without 'artificial' support. Materially, the village is seen to have benefited from a wide range of developments which have improved it as a place in which to live for the Maltese countryman with his now greater range of demands - and the buying-power with which to achieve them, thanks to war-time siege and subsequently to Government subsidy and guarantee. Socially, literacy and the awareness of a different way of life beyond the village have brought to the younger generation an intense dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction not only with the social regime of the village, even in its present broadened and functionally diversified form, but also with the farming on which the community has depended.

Thus farming in its present form is waning and the Maltese farmer as he was in the recent past - and still is among the older generation - is a disappearing individual. If the clash between the present younger generation and the old order can be resolved and if the retreat from the land can be stemmed at all, a different kind of agriculture will emerge with a new type of farmer and a changed rural society.

REFERENCES

1. Census of the Maltese Islands 1948. Table 53.
2. C.A.R.E. - Co-operative for American Remittances to Everywhere.

Note: For a fuller consideration see B. W. Beckey: 'The Individual and Changing Rural Society in Malta', Ph.D. Thesis, Durham, 1956.

175 722 511 454 During the war years the farmer had been able to strengthen his financial position to an unprecendented extent. The high prices which he could command left him with a large reserve upon which to draw during the decade after 1945. Today these reserves are dwindling and disappearing. In part they have been put towards capital improvements on the farm - notably the acquisition of cows and machinery (Section 2), and in part they have been spent on routine home and family maintainance. The farmer in [369] post-War Malta and Gozo has been struggling to live up to 'Urban' standards, to many of which he was introduced as a [426] result of the War. He has, in many cases, been living above his means to the extent of being perpetually in debt. He has somehow failed to adapt himself to his new position and still looks back nostaligically, at least from the financial point of view, to his commanding position during the siege.

434 511 171 [369] Today the farmer's standard of living compares unfavourably with that of the Urban working classes but is notably higher than that of other farming communities in nearby Mediterranean countries. In rural Greece, for example, annual earnings frequently do not exceed £25, although the average per capita income for the whole country is over £60[29]. Yet prices for simple clothing and other essential items are often quite exorbitant, especially for the impoverished Greek farmer. A 1954 survey of seventy Libyan farms in the Zawia area of northern Tripolitania found an average 'farm earnings' of £136 per annum[30], but the present rate for casual farm labour in the area is some 5/- per day only (about £75 per annum) and even less in more rural districts[31].

Thus in Libya a field-labourer may expect to earn little more than half the income of a land-holding farmer. [434] In Malta, however, the situation appears reversed, and the labourer without field commitments of his own can demand his 25/- for an eight-hour day and emerge, in many cases, markedly better off than the farmer who hired him and who stands the loss on unsold, unprofitable or damaged crops.

511 434 Within his own country the Maltese farmer has, on average, a standard of life still slightly below the general level, although the disparity is by no means as great as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Above-average exceptions include those farmers who have been able to profit from the present regime of guaranteed milk sales by building up a large herd, or those who can still draw upon war-time savings or other accumulated reserves.

735 434 The C.A.R.E.[27] assessment of poverty made for the purpose of free food distributions to poor and needy

747 848

735 families provides a most useful basis for a comparison.
747 The assessment included a scale of income and other wealth
434 and assets against family size. Thus a household of four
648 persons, in 1958, with a total income below £5 per week or a family of 16 receiving less than £6.6s would qualify for the free food[32].

162 The 6568 'poor and needy' families entitled on the
735 above basis to receive C.A.R.E. supplies[33] were classified by
434 place of residence (February, 1958)[34]. Households in which the breadwinner was a farmer or farm-labourer were, in addition, also listed separately. The residential divisions used were those demarcated in Section 1 on the basis of the farming (i.e. rural) element in the working population (Map 2).

TABLE 7

DISTRICT	A POPULATION[35]	B 'Poor & Needy' as % Population	C FARMERS[36]	D 'Poor & Needy' Farmers as % Farmers	E B/D
Urban Area	134,399	5.9	224	4.4	1.34
Fringe	83,898	8.6	1150	5.4	1.59
Inner Rural	41,955	9.4	1513	5.8	1.62
Rural	48,476	10.6	3404	9.1	1.16
Outer Rural	10,882	14.5	1522	21.6	0.67
Total	319,820	8.2	7813	8	0.9

369 The figures in B and D illustrate the declining living
735 standards with distance from the Urban Area. Since, as
511 has been observed in Section 1, the rural community in Malta
162 and Gozo is based primarily on farming they therefore reflect the lower living standards towards the agricultural parts of Malta and, particularly, of Gozo. D and E show that the farmers in the Inner Rural and Fringe zones tend to be less poor than those in other districts, though in the Rural Zone they are nearer the general level (E). In the Outer Rural zone (most of Gozo, and Mgarr in Malta), however, the farmer is patently very much poorer (D) even than the general average for the zone (B) which is by definition the most dependent on agriculture. As a class, the farmers in this zone are one third below the general level as far as their standard of living is concerned (cf. the 0.67 under E).

The figures for the Urban Area reveal that although only 4.4% of these 224 farmers are poor enough to qualify for C.A.R.E. help (the lowest percentage under D) they are nearer the general level (B) than is the case in either the Fringe or the Inner Rural zones. The difficult position of these 'urban' farmers is exemplified by Case V.

654 426 454 herdsman to produce a new over-grown dairy industry (v. figures of milk purchases and surpluses earlier in this Section).

Similar problems arise from the way in which the loans have helped farmers to acquire machinery for working their fields. As regards the small rotary cultivators this may be to the good but the position of the larger type of tractor is much more doubtful (v. Section 2), and little advisory control is at present being exercised.

UNIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES

829 467 The farmers' attitude to officialdom and 'Gvern' has been characterized by suspicion and doubt. But certainly no less strained have been relations between one farmer and another. An 'every man for himself' attitude has emerged on the administrative side of farming in the Islands, though not at the level of small-scale economic [474] co-operation (Section 2). The main outcome of this has been that Unions of farmers have had only a limited appeal and even marketing Co-operatives have only recently assumed [747] any importance. The very recent tractor co-operatives (Section 2) are proving successful but would probably not have begun without free donations of equipment by C.A.R.E.[29].

A common attitude met among all types of farmers in the Islands is that "Unions can do nothing for the farmer". At present there are two but, even together, they account for a very small part of the farming population and certainly have little effect on policy or on the organization of the farming industry. One of the two Unions was founded thirty years ago but the entire administration appears to be in the hands of one man and the farmers themselves take no part in it. In 1956 a faction within the Union broke away and registered a second Union but this too has been supported by a very small number of individuals[43]. The fear at all times is that someone with education and ambitions will make use of such a Union for his own good and have no concern for the welfare of the farmers. Too ignorant and illiterate to speak for himself the farmer believes he is surrounded by treachery on all sides and consequently withdraws from all combined effort. He is still enough a peasant at heart to believe that his own interests can best be served by he himself maintaining strict independence in his farming. This emerges throughout the projects of official help to the farming community outlined above.

829 474 It has also precluded the development of a substantial co-operative movement in agricultural marketing and trading.

28. i.e. the villages.

29. C.A.R.E.[27] Publicity Department Statement, 1957.

[113] 30. "Report to the Government of Libya on Indigenous and Italian Farm Enterprises in the Zavia Area". FAO Report No.259, Rome 1954, p.80.

31. Personal communication from Mr. R.W. Hill, Dept. of Geography, Durham Colleges.

434 32. C.A.R.E.[27] scale of income (as in the Second Distribution, 1957-58, revised):

747 Family of 3 or 4 persons ....maximum income - £5
648 " " 5 to 7 " .... " " - £5 8s
735 " " 8 " 10 " .... " " - £5 15s
" " 11 " 13 " .... " " - £6 1s
" " 14 " 16 " .... " " - £6 6s
" " 17 or 18 " .... " " - £6 10s

33. In addition to the 'General Poor and Needy' category here considered C.A.R.E.[27] supplies went (March, 1958) automatically to 15,181 Old Age Pensioners and to 8,321 individuals on Social Service Assistance.

[122] 34. Permission for the writer to make this analysis and much other valuable help was given by Mr. J. Boissevain, Chief of C.A.R.E. Mission in Malta at that time (7 Feb. 1958).

35. (B/168, pp.38-40).

36. i.e. Full-time farmers (B/164 - 1957, pp.20-21), excluding 679 farmers who rendered no census return.

37. Since April, 1958, the Islands have been without a locally elected Government (December, 1959).

113 38. "Labour Government's Progress Report. 1956-57", Malta, Central Office of Information, 1957, v.p.37.

39. J. McClemont in lecture "Aims and Objects of the Dairy Training Course (1957) and the Functions of an Advisory Service", Malta, Dept. of Agriculture, 1957, unpub.

40. "Ghalf Bilanbjat ghall-Majjali" by A.T. Haesler, Chief Agricultural Advisory Officer, 1957, Malta.

41. E.G. Bonnici Enriquez in lecture "The Dairy Industry in the Islands of Malta and Gozo", Malta, Dept. of Agriculture, 1957, unpub.

42. v. Appendix 1 C and 1 D for details of the present trading position.

43. Both Unions were first officially registered in 1948 but these registrations lapsed. The Ghaqda Nazzjonali tal-Bdiewa (1976 members in 1956) was re-registered in 1956 with only 494 members (Dept. of Labour and Social Welfare).

44. Information on the Co-Operative Movement was kindly provided by Mr. Farrugia.

45. Information on Unions, Co-operatives and the Malta Milk Company (K.M.M.) as at Easter, 1958.

46. That is excluding the Farmers' Central Co-operative.

[114] 47. The Summaries were compiled by Mr. H. Bowen-Jones and Mr. J.C. Dewdney of the Department of Geography, Durham Colleges, from the field material amassed by Mr. P.K. Mitchell and the writer.

[124] 48. As the information on which these Studies are based was given in confidence identities have been purposely obscured.

49. i.e. Tmien, Bighan and Kejliet : v. Appendix 5.